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WHILE THE SUN SHINES

A Civil Defense Primer

The problem of survival that challenges our utmost resources today has been years in the making. It cannot be fully summarized within the covers of this magazine. Yet since we must face it now, with or without complete understanding, this primer in catechism form is presented as the groundwork upon which a more detailed study may be based.

WHAT IS CIVIL DEFENSE?

The term is a recent coinage covering a need as old as war itself. There has never been a time when armies did not attack civilian populations. From Jericho to Japan the tale of human conflict is black with monuments to faulty plans for home-front protection. The techniques of warfare change, the tempo quickens, the combat zone expands. But for every weapon yet devised there are defensive measures that can turn the scale from easy surrender to counterattack and eventual victory.

This is not a vague hope born of wishful thinking. It's a fact proved by the record. More than half the lives lost at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 could have been saved by a well-planned Civil Defense. The new weapons are powerful but not necessarily decisive. There's still a big difference between taking a punch you're prepared for and getting knocked out in the first round because you didn't see it coming.

WHY IS CIVIL DEFENSE NECESSARY?

Our enemies are pledged to world conquest. The only obstacles in the way are American resources of manpower and industry. They have the means to wage atomic, bacteriological, and chemical warfare, which they will not hesitate to use whenever the chance appears greatest of bringing our country to its knees.

By every possible criterion, Pennsylvania will be a No. 1 target so long as men possess weapons. Nowhere else in the United States is there a greater concentration of vital industry and transport systems within easy access by sea or air. One-fifth of all this nation's industrial resources are located in the Commonwealth. If these were once destroyed, either by armed attack from outside or by sabotage from within, there would be little point in any further resistance on the battlefields. The war would be over and the country in the hands of a foreign overlord.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT IT?

First you organize. Teamwork without direction is just as impossible in Civil Defense as in any other human activity. In modern warfare "Every

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fellow for himself" would mean not merely confusion but mass suicide. Since the States are interdependent, organization begins as a national problem, with the Federal Civil Defense Administration taking the lead. The Military and Civil Defense Commission for Pennsylvania, headed by Major General Richard K. Mellon as Chairman and Colonel Alton C. Miller as Director, is responsible for translating Federal policy into action through the medium of the County Coordinators, who in turn pass on State directives to townships and municipalities.

Then you plan. A "Civil Defense plan" is really a complicated network of individual plans, each dependent on all the others. Some of the work is preventive - for example, shelter construction, plant protection air-raid warning provisions. Some is disaster duty - fire-fighting, rescue work, first aid. All of it must be planned in detail so that the various services work together effectively and no two staffs count on using the same supplies of manpower or materiel at the same time.

Then you train. Many Civil Defense jobs have no exact parallel in ordinary peacetime life. Others require more manpower than is needed under normal conditions. Every plan must therefore provide for the training of auxiliaries to existing services, such as police and firemen, and of volunteers for duties like those of air-raid warden, ambulance driver, or nurses' aide. Some of this will be done in Federal and State schools. Some will be done right on the job. Some will be done by private agencies such as the Red Cross, which is already offering new courses in first aid.

WHO DOES THE WORK?

So far as possible, plans will be made and operations directed in cooperation with individuals and organizations already experienced in the same or related fields. But in the final analysis, Civil Defense is everybody's job - or nobody's. The best of plans cannot be effective unless every man, woman, and child in this Commonwealth knows the facts about modern warfare, understands what he can do to help himself, his family, and his community, and remembers how much we have to lose.

Here is where each specialist can put his own knowledge and experience to use, whether or not he is officially connected with any defense organization. The civil engineer can offer aid in transportation planning, the shop foreman or even the club president in organizing teams of volunteers, the teacher and the housewife in preparing children to undergo the necessary discipline, and in creating the morale that must be sustained against the threat of confusion and panic.

WHEN WILL ALL THE WORK BE DONE?

To be fully prepared for what may happen is the work of years, probably of decades, possibly of generations. But the enemy will not sit quietly back and wait for us to get ready. We must do all we can, the best we can, with what we have right now.

Since the Military and Civil Defense Commission for Pennsylvania was

set up last September, some of the questions have been answered. Many more remain. Here are a few examples that will serve to illustrate the problem.

Q. If industry is the chief target, can anything be done to protect it?

A. A detailed technique for safeguarding industrial establishments against both external and internal damage has been summarized in a manual which will be distributed early this year to factories, utility companies, and institutions throughout the State. The Commission will confer with management representatives to work out methods of applying this technique in individual plants.

Q. If an atomic bomb burst over one of our large cities, wouldn't everybody for miles around be killed by radiation?

A. Most of the deaths caused by atomic bombs in Japan were the result of burns, flying debris, or being trapped under piled-up rubble, as in an ordinary high-explosive attack. For those who do receive dangerous amounts of radiation, much can be done by prompt and skilled medical care. An advisory committee headed by Dr. Norris W. Vaux, Secretary of Health, is now preparing recommendations on medical supplies, services, and manpower. In the meantime, a corps of professional nurses specially trained in the treatment of atomic casualties are working out a course of instruction as the first step in developing a State-wide mobile emergency nursing reserve.

Q. What will happen to people whose homes have been destroyed?

A. Evacuation plans prepared locally under State direction will be carried out in accordance with a system of mutual aid and mobile support permitting orderly disposition of disaster victims throughout the surrounding areas. Problems of food, shelter, and other immediate needs will be handled by the reception area with the aid of public and private welfare agencies.

Q. How can you prevent firemen, rescue workers, and road-clearance crews from getting in each other's way? Won't all these separate plans conflict when they go into action?

A. The only way to guard against this is to stage a hypothetical bombing attack on some specific target and then figure out the answers to the resulting problems. Such tests have already been made in Washington, Seattle, and Chicago, and one is scheduled for Philadelphia on February 13th. If there have been mistakes in traffic planning, they will be revealed by the test exercise in time to be corrected before the task becomes a real one. A similar exercise will be held in Pittsburgh on a date to be specified within the near future.

What has been accomplished so far is only the beginning. The amount of time and effort required to bring the goal within measurable reach is still tremendous. We cannot look forward to the end of the job. We can only work

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together without ceasing, in the full awareness that "a little later" may be too late.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW?

You can ask your local defense council when and how to register for volunteer duty.

You can find out from the Red Cross how you or some other adult member of your family can enroll for a first-aid course.

You can ask your council for background material that will enable you to tell your family, your friends, and your associates the facts about Civil Defense, to combat rumors and help build the morale needed for the long task ahead.